

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-27. (Cancelled).

28. (Currently Amended) A method for managing the respective processing loads of a plurality of processors in a processor network, comprising the steps of:

a first network management processor issuing a processing load information collection message to an adjacent processor;

said adjacent processor adding into the message its analyzed processing load information and forwarding said message to yet another processor of the processor network which repeats the adding and forwarding functions; wherein,

a processor forwards the message with the added processing load information to the first network management processor, which determines, on the basis of the processing load information of the processors stored in said processing load information collection message, a load balancing technique for load distribution among the processors in said processor network;

wherein said processing load information collection message is a first processing load exploration program unit, wherein said processing load exploration program unit analyses the respective processing load of each of the processors to which it is forwarded and stores corresponding processing load information; and,

wherein the determination by said first network management processor of said load balancing technique comprises determining a respective load balancing method for each of said processors.

29-30. (Cancelled).

31. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[30]] 28, wherein at least one of said processors has stored a plurality of load balancing methods and said first network management processor sends a load balancing method activation message to said at least one processor for activating the load balancing method determined for the processor.

32. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 31, wherein, prior to said first network management processor sending said load balancing method activation message to said at least one processor for activating the load balancing method determined for the processor, said first network management processor determines whether said load balancing method determined for the processor is presently stored at said processor.

33. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 31, wherein said first network management processor sends a load balancing method implementation message, including the respective determined load balancing method, and said at least one processor implements and activates said included load balancing method.

34. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[29]] 28, wherein said first processing load exploration program unit determines at each processor whether the processor is a network management processor or not.

35. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[29]] 28, wherein said first processing load exploration program unit is passed from processor to processor in accordance with a predetermined order of processors.

36. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[29]] 28, wherein said first processing load exploration program unit is passed from processor to processor in a predetermined group of processors.

37. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[29]] 28, wherein at least one further processing load exploration program unit is passed from processor to processor in parallel with said first processing load exploration program unit.

38. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 37, wherein said first processing load exploration program unit and said further processing load exploration program unit are passed from processor to processor in different sequences.

39. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 28, wherein said plurality of processors comprises at least one further network management processor.

40. (Currently Amended) A network including a network management processor and a plurality of networked processors and having incorporated a load balancing technique for managing processing loads amongst said networked processors, wherein:

a) a processing load information collection message is provided including an instruction unit for initiating an analysis of processing loads at a processor and a storage unit for storing processing load information about the analyzed processing loads;

b) each processor has a reception unit for receiving said processing load information collection message, a processor for running said received exploration program unit, and a transmission unit for forwarding said processing load information collection message to a next processor; and,

c) said network management processor has a transmission unit for transmitting said processing load information collection message to a first processor in the processor network, and a reception unit for receiving said processing load information

collection message from a processor and a determining unit to determine, on the basis of the processing load information of the processors stored in said load exploration program unit storage section, a load balancing technique for load distribution among the processors in said processor network;

wherein said processing load information collection message is a processing load exploration program unit, and said instruction unit of said processing load information collection message is an analysis program unit for performing an analysis of processing loads at a processor, and wherein said instruction unit of said processing load information collection message also causes the determining unit of said network management processor to determine said load balancing technique; and,

wherein the determination of said load balancing technique comprises determining a respective load balancing method for each of said processors.

41-42. (Cancelled).

43. (Currently Amended) The network according to claim [[41]] 40, wherein at least one of said processors has a storage unit to store a plurality of load balancing methods, and said network management processor is adapted to send a load balancing method activation message to said at least one processor for activating the load balancing method determined for the processor.

44. (Currently Amended) The network according to claim [[41]] 40, wherein said network management processor has a transmission unit to send to at least one processor a load balancing method implementation message including the respective determined load balancing method, and said at least one processor has a receiver unit to receive an to implement and activate said included load balancing method.

45. (Currently Amended) The network according to claim [[41]] 40, wherein said transmission unit and said reception unit of each of said processors

respectively is adapted such that said processing load exploration program unit is passed from processor to processor in accordance with a predetermined order of processors.

46. (Currently Amended) The network according to claim [[36]] 40, wherein said transmission unit and said reception unit of each of said processors respectively is adapted such that said processing load exploration program unit is passed from processor to processor in a predetermined group of processors.

47-54. (Cancelled).

* * *